

HARBOR PORPOISE TAKE REDUCTION PLAN (HPTRP)

Gulf of Maine

September 2006



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For more information contact NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
Northeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division at 978-281-9300
or visit the HPTRP website at www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/porptrp

Overview of Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) directs NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to reduce the number of marine mammal deaths and serious injuries caused by commercial fishing gear. In particular, the MMPA requires the federal government to protect any marine mammal stock in which the potential biological removal (PBR) level is being exceeded. PBR is defined as the number of human-caused deaths the stock can withstand annually and still reach and maintain an optimum population level.

On December 1, 1998, NMFS published a final rule in the *Federal Register* to implement the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan (HPTRP). The HPTRP was developed to reduce interactions between harbor porpoise and commercial gillnet gear in both the Gulf of Maine and the Mid-Atlantic regions. Subsequent to the final rule publication, a correction notice to the final rule was published on December 23, 1998. In addition, a final rule was published on January 11, 2001 to modify the list of exempted waters to include all of Delaware Bay landward of the 72 COLREGS demarcation line (International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972).

Harbor porpoise are found in coastal and offshore waters where they prey on small schooling fish, including some fish that are sought by gillnet fishermen and, as a result, can become entangled in gillnets. They are difficult to study because they are widely dispersed in small groups and spend little time at the surface. The Gulf of Maine/ Bay of Fundy stock of harbor porpoise is the stock that is managed by the HPTRP. Along the east coast of North America, they can be found from Labrador to North Carolina. Their distribution varies unpredictably from year to year depending on environmental conditions such as water temperature and prey distribution. Generally, in the winter, a part of this stock moves south to waters between New York and North Carolina. In the summer, harbor porpoise are generally found in the northern Gulf of Maine and southern Bay of Fundy area. In the fall and spring, they are widely dispersed from Maine to New Jersey.

The most recent US Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Stock Assessment report provides the most current information about the harbor porpoise population, including the PBR level.

This outreach guide pertains to the Gulf of Maine portion of the HPTRP found in 50 CFR 229.33.





Gulf of Maine Gillnet Fishing Closure Areas

The Gulf of Maine portion of the HPTRP pertains to all commercial fishing with sink gillnet gear or other gillnet gear capable of catching multispecies in New England waters from Maine through Rhode Island in specific times and areas. Vessels using pelagic gillnets/baitnets (as described in 50 CFR 648.81 (f)(2)(ii)) are exempt from this plan. The HPTRP includes time and area closures, some of which are complete closures. Others are closures to multispecies gillnet fishing unless pingers are used in the prescribed manner (see page 6).

Regulated Waters

Northeast Closure Area		Massachusetts Bay Closure Area		Offshore Closure Area	
Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
Maine shoreline	68° 55.0'W	42° 30'N	MA shoreline	42° 50'N	69° 30'W
43° 29.6'N	68° 55.0'W	42° 30'N	70° 30'W	43° 10'N	69° 10'W
44° 04.4'N	67° 48.7'W	42° 12'N	70° 30'W	43° 10'N	67° 40'W
44° 06.9'N	67° 52.8'W	42° 12'N	70° 00'W	42° 10'N	67° 40'W
44° 31.2'N	67° 02.7'W	Cape Cod shoreline	70° 00'W	42° 10'N	69° 30'W
Maine shoreline	67° 02.7'W	42° 00'N	Cape Cod shoreline	42° 50'N	69° 30'W

Mid-Coast Closure Area		Cape Cod South Closure Area		Cashes Ledge Closure Area	
Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
42° 30'N	MA shoreline	RI shoreline	71° 45'W	42° 30'N	69° 00'W
42° 30'N	70° 15'W	40° 40'N	71° 45'W	42° 30'N	68° 30'W
42° 40'N	70° 15'W	40° 40'N	70° 30'W	43° 00'N	68° 30'W
42° 40'N	70° 00'W	MA shoreline	70° 30'W	43° 00'N	69° 00'W
43° 00'N	70° 00'W			43° 00'N	69° 00'W
43° 00'N	69° 30'W			42° 30'N	69° 00'W
43° 30'N	69° 30'W				
43° 30'N	69° 00'W				
Maine shoreline	69° 00'W				

NOTE: Figure 2 depicts all of the Gulf of Maine Closure Areas described above. See page 7.

NOTE: This document is intended to be an overview of the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan (HPTRP) and is not a substitute for the HPTRP or Final Rule. Please see these documents for additional information.

Management Measures for the Gulf of Maine

Areas and Dates	Restrictions	Associated Graphic
Northeast Closure Area August 15 to September 13	No Gillnets	Figure 3 (page 7)
Mid-Coast Closure Area September 15 to May 31	Gillnets with pingers	Figure 4 (page 8)
Massachusetts Bay Closure Area December 1 to February 28/29 March 1-31 April 1 to May 31	Gillnets with pingers No Gillnets Gillnets with pingers	Figure 5 (page 9)
Cape Cod South Closure Area December 1 to February 28/29 March 1-31 April 1 to May 31	Gillnets with pingers No Gillnets Gillnets with pingers	Figure 6 (page 10)
Offshore Closure Area November 1 to May 31	Gillnets with pingers	Figure 7 (page 11)
Cashes Ledge Closure Area (Located within Offshore Closure Area) November 1 to January 31 February 1-28/29 March 1 to May 31	Gillnets with pingers No Gillnets Gillnets with pingers	Figure 7 (page 11)

NOTE: Figure 2 depicts the Gulf of Maine closure areas described above. See page 7.

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Pinger Requirements and Pelagic Gillnet Exemption

Pinger Specifications: a pinger is an acoustic deterrent device which, when immersed in water, broadcasts a 10 kHz (± 2 kHz) sound at 132 dB (± 4 dB) re 1 micropascal at 1 m, lasting 300 milliseconds (± 15 milliseconds), and repeating every 4 seconds (± 0.2 seconds).

Pinger Attachment: a pinger must be attached at the end of each string of gillnets and at the bridle of every net within a string of nets (see Figure 1 below).

Pinger Training and Certification: The operator of a vessel may not fish with, set, or haul back sink gillnets or gillnet gear, allow such gear to be in closed areas where pingers are required unless the operator has satisfactorily completed the pinger certification training program and possesses on board the vessel a valid pinger training certificate issued by NMFS.

For more information about pinger certification training, please contact the NMFS Gear Liaison, John Higgins, at 207-677-2316.

Figure 1: Placement of Pingers on Gillnet Panels

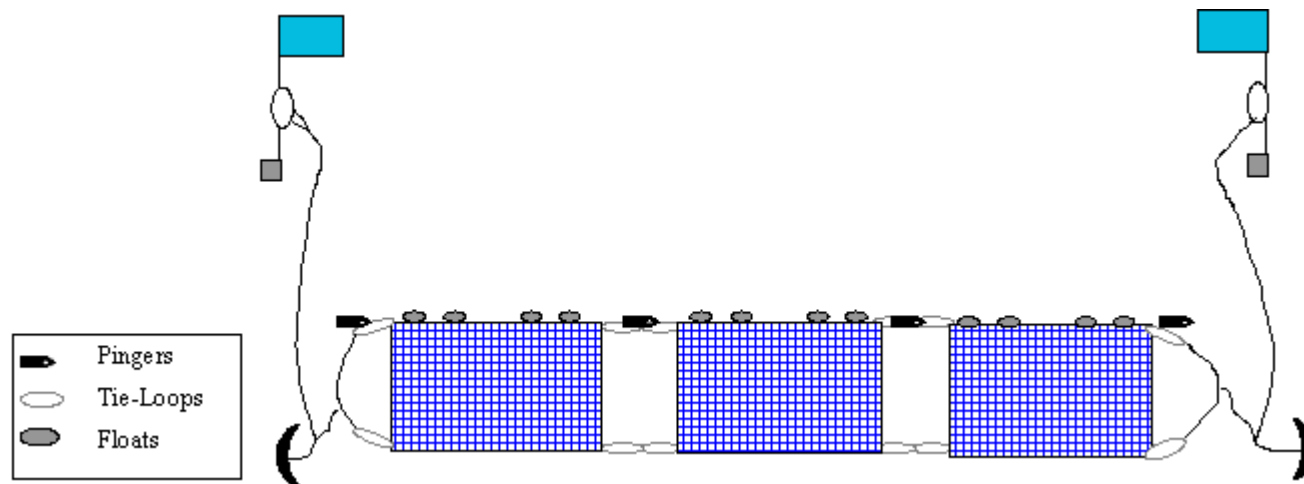


Figure 2: HPTRP Closure Areas for the Gulf of Maine

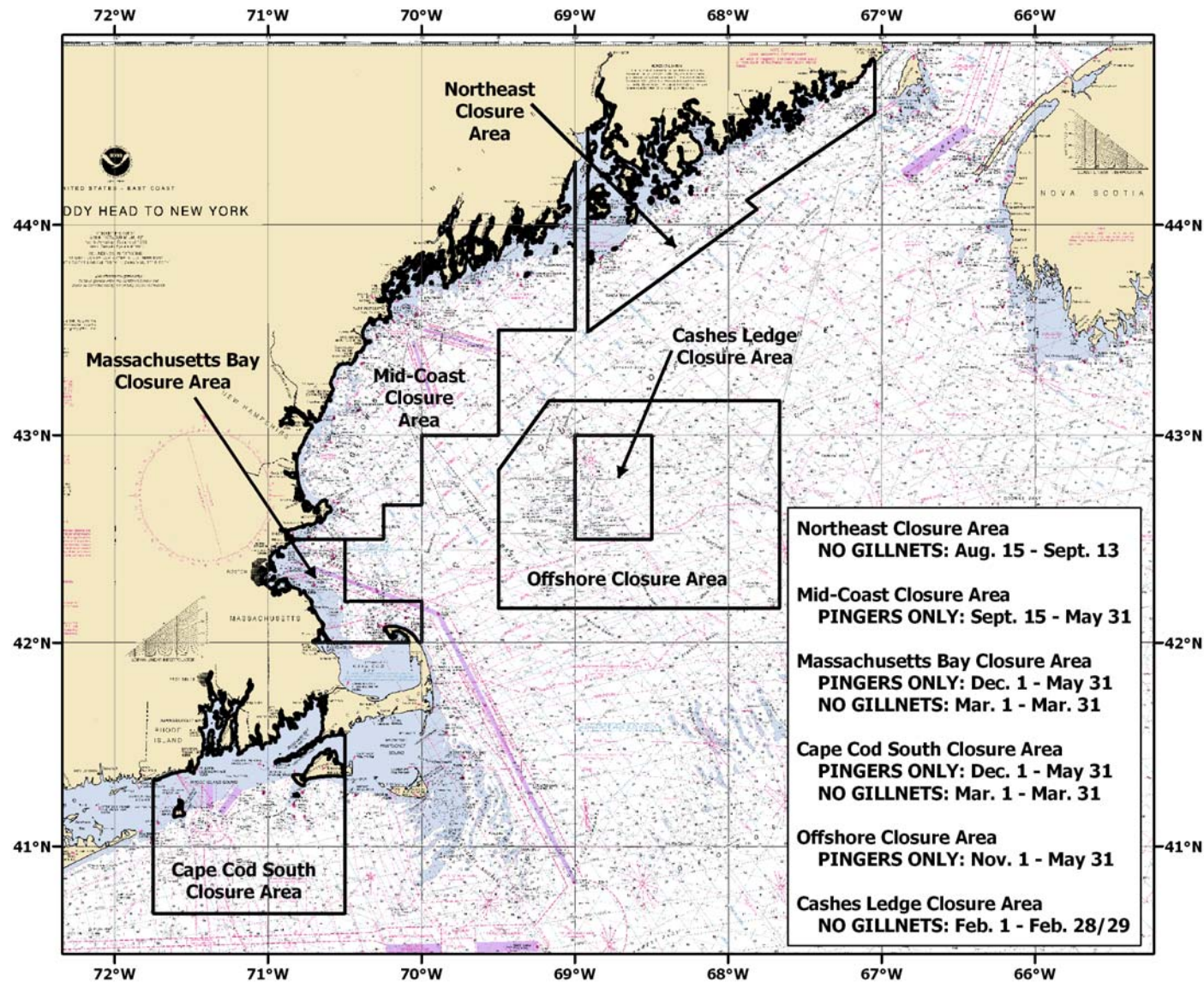


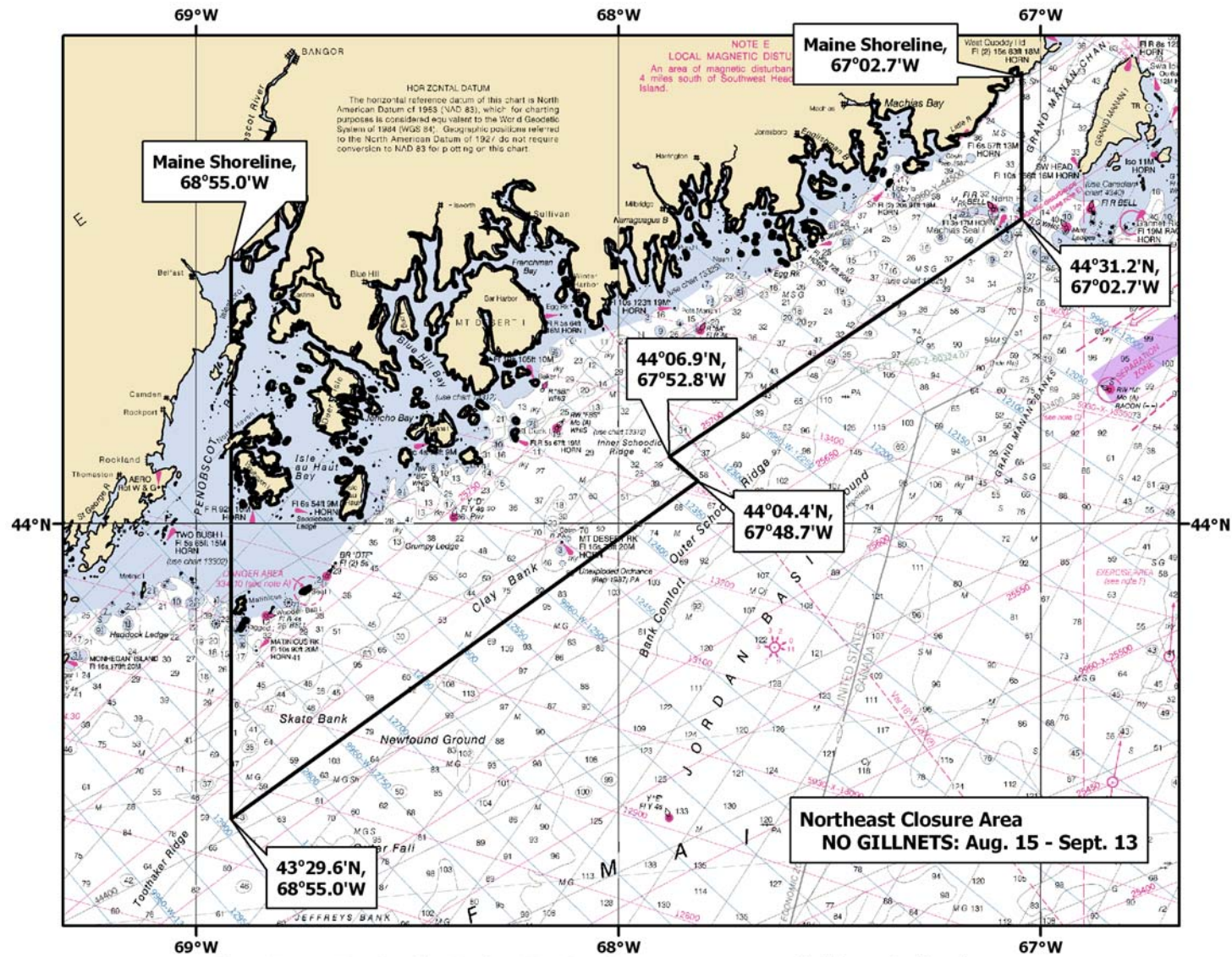
Chart Name: West Quoddy Head to NY - East Coast
Chart #: 13006_1

- Not for navigational purposes
- Depth units = fathoms





Figure 3: HPTRP Northeast Closure Area



- Not for navigational purposes
- Depth units = fathoms

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Figure 4: HPTRP Mid-Coast Closure Area

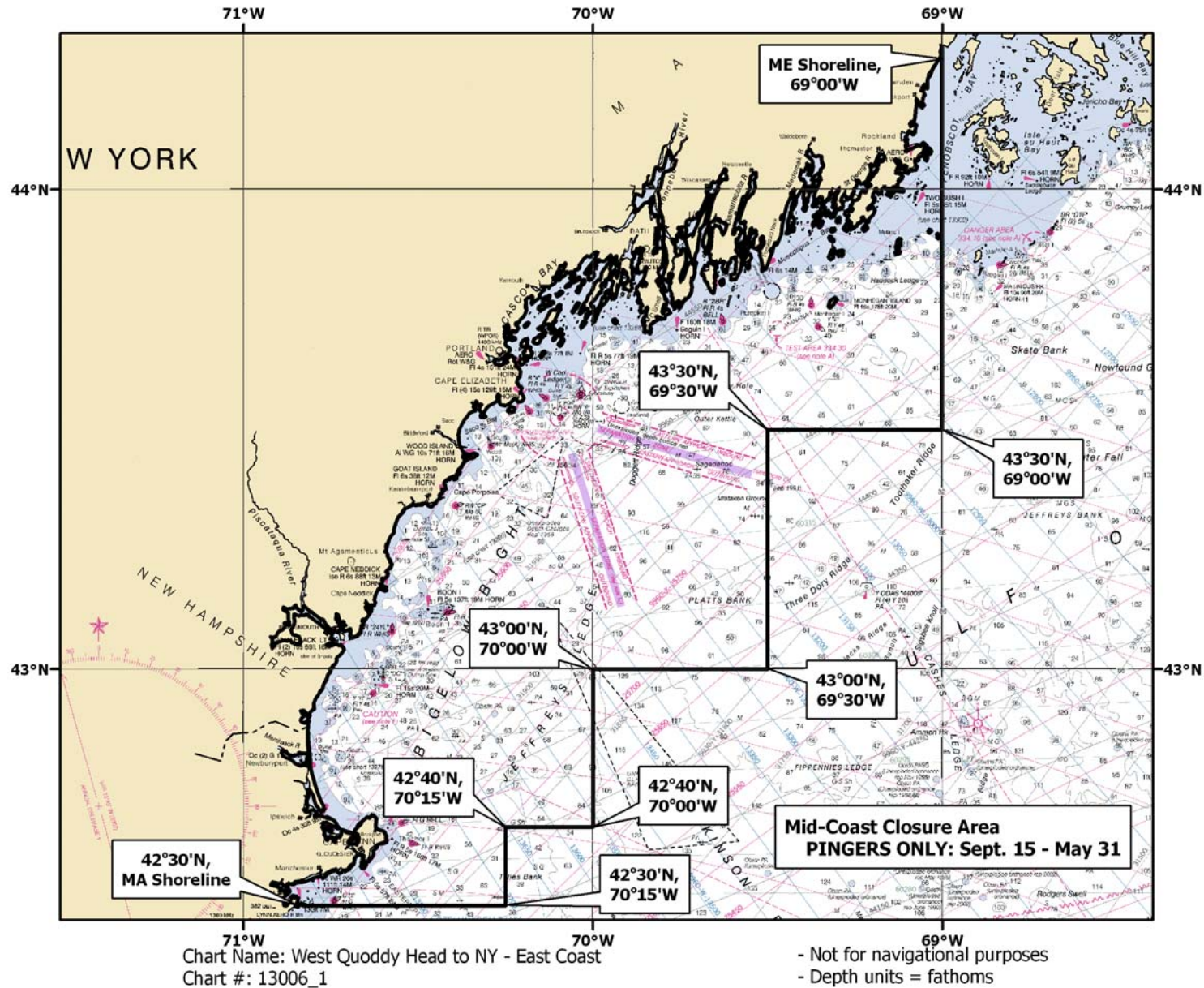
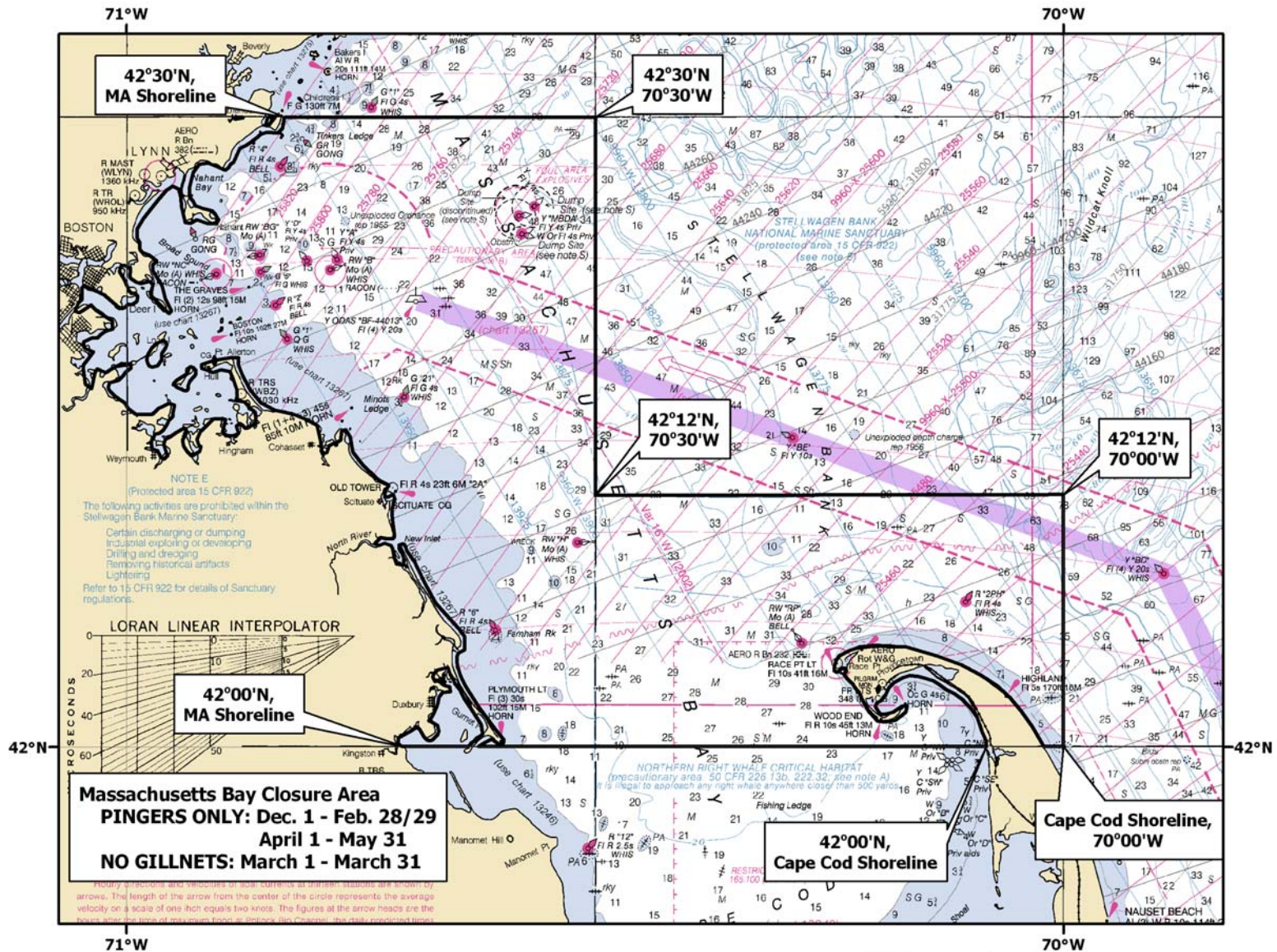




Figure 5: HPTRP Massachusetts Bay Closure Area



72°W

71°W

41°N

40°40'N, 71°45'W

40°40'N, 70°30'W

Cape Cod South Closure Area
PINGERS ONLY: Dec. 1 - Feb. 28/29
April 1 - May 31
NO GILLNETS: March 1 - March 31

MA Shoreline 70°30'W

RI Shoreline 71°45'W

72°W

71°W

41°N

- Not for navigational purposes
- Depth units = fathoms



Figure 7: HPTRP Offshore Closure Area

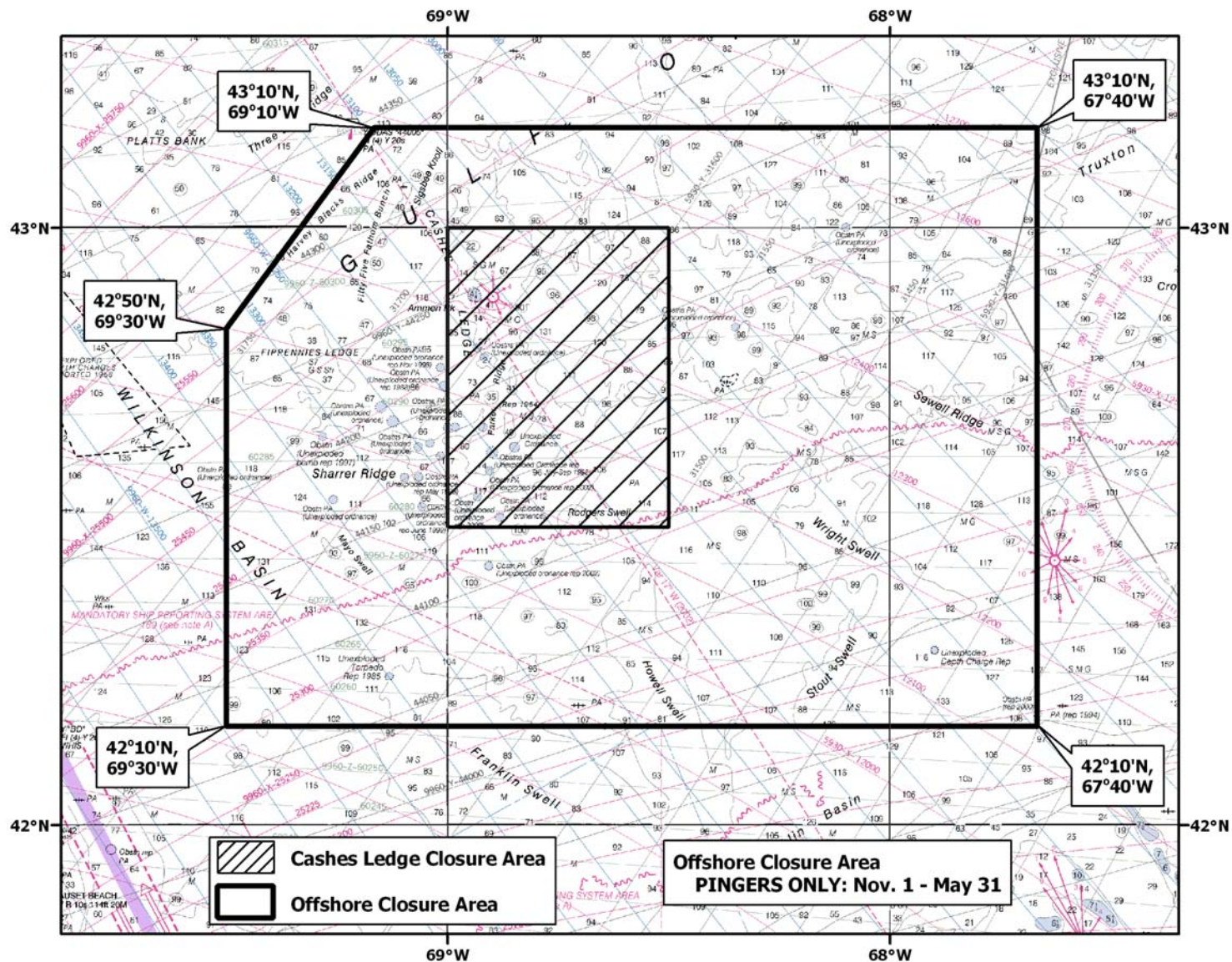


Chart Name: West Quoddy Head to NY - East Coast
Chart #: 13006 1

- Not for navigational purposes
- Depth units = fathoms

Figure 8: HPTRP Cashes Ledge Closure Area

